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INSIDE THE BELTWAY

Those left behind

Wives and children of some of the 6,000 prisoners held in Vietnamese "re-education camps" sponsored a reception last night in the Dirksen Senate Office Building to mark the 12th anniversary of the fall of Saigon to the communists on April 30, 1975.

The prisoners are South Vietnamese civil officials and military leaders who resisted the communist takeover of the country. "It's easy to forget these people because so much time has passed and many Americans want to forget the Vietnam War, but we cannot let that happen," said Frank Sieverts, spokesman for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and an organizer of the event.

The United States has told the Vietnamese government it will accept the political prisoners when they are released, but the communist government has snubbed overtures for negotiation. The Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association is seeking congressional pressure for the release of those held in the camps.

Attending last night's reception were Sens. Edward Kennedy, Mark Hatfield, Claiborne Pell, John Glenn, Barbara Mikulski and Richard Lugar. Also Reps. Stephen Solarz, G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery and Ben Gilman as well as former CIA Director William Colby and former Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson. A